

2001 being a Saturday, please amend the above-identified application as follows:

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims pursuant to 37 C.F.R. 1.121 as follows (see the accompanying "marked up" version pursuant to 1.121):

10. (Amended) A wire bonding method, comprising the steps of:
 forming a bond pad made from an interconnect material on a
 semiconductor substrate;
 encapsulating said bond pad with a passivation layer;
 bonding a wire onto the passivation layer, wherein the wire is more
 metallurgically stable than the interconnect material;
 wherein a portion of the passivation layer forms a metallurgical bond with
 the interconnect material; and
 wherein a mechanical and electrical connection is provided between the
 interconnect material and the wire, with the passivation layer disposed therebetween.

Add the following claim:

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21. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of depositing the tantalum
(Ta) layer encapsulates the copper (Cu) bond pad.